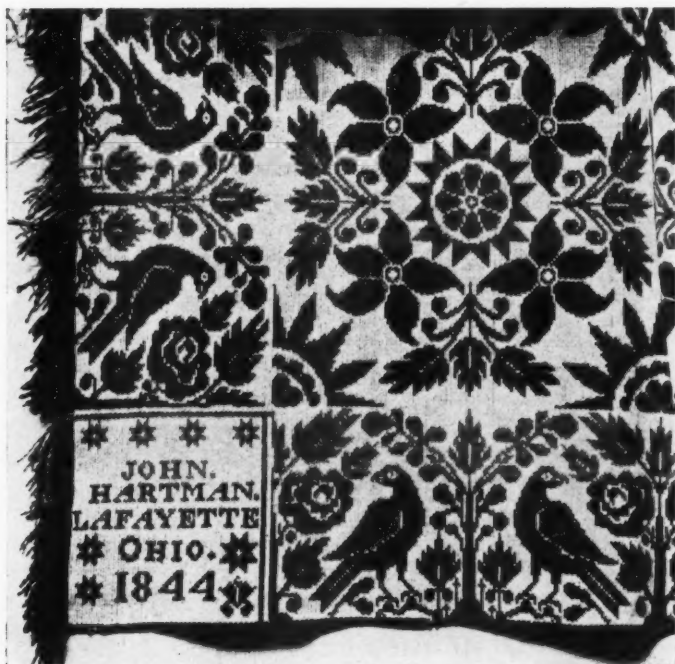
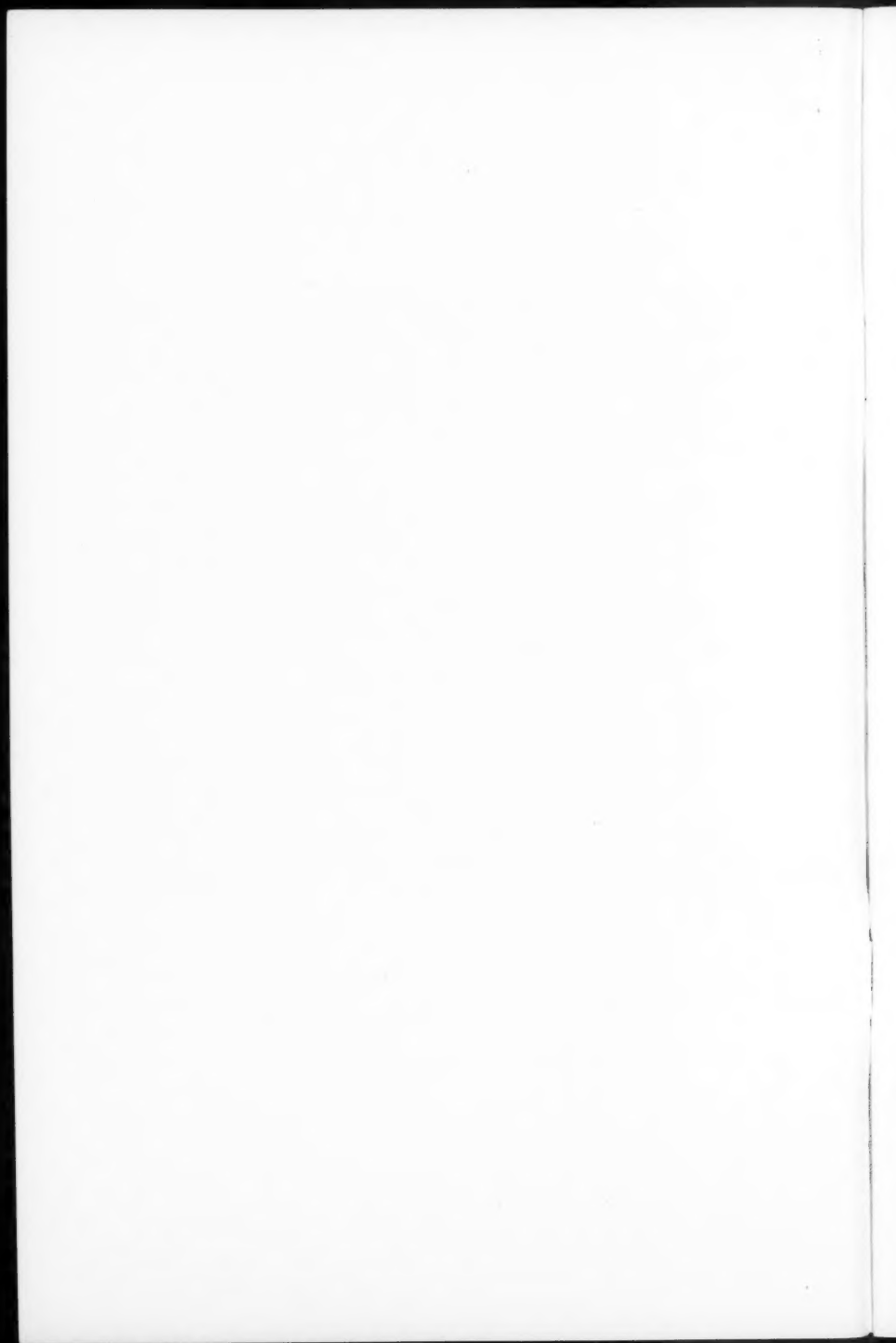


BULLETIN OF THE  
ALLEN MEMORIAL ART MUSEUM  
OF OBERLIN COLLEGE



American Coverlet, See p. 49

The Helen Ward Memorial Room and  
An Exhibition of Costumes and  
Textiles from the Museum Collections



## Foreword

The formation and display of this collection in memory of our daughter, Helen, and the preparation of this number of the Bulletin have been the work of many hands and a "labor of love" on the part of many of her friends and associates. To all who have so generously given objects, money and time to make the collection possible and its display successful, I should like to express our warmest personal thanks. It has been impossible for a number of reasons to name the source of each separate object, but the Bulletin does contain a list of all donors in alphabetical order, and a careful record of the individual gifts of each one is in the museum files and these may be consulted at any time. We have endeavored to thank each donor at the time at which his gift was received, but I should like to add this printed expression of our personal gratitude and that of the college for their thoughtfulness and generosity. We are sure that they join with us in hoping that the objects listed in this bulletin will prove but a beginning of a collection of textiles and costumes as notable as are the museum's acquisitions in other fields.

The arduous task of arranging this exhibition has been carried out with her usual skill by the Curator of the Museum, Mrs. Hazel B. King, with the aid of her assistant, Miss Louise Richards, and many volunteers. To each of them and to Professor Margaret Schaffler, who has not only assisted in preparing the exhibits but has also written this catalogue under heavy pressure of time and duties, I should like to extend Mrs. Ward's and my very deep gratitude and appreciation.

CLARENCE WARD, *Director*

May, 1949.

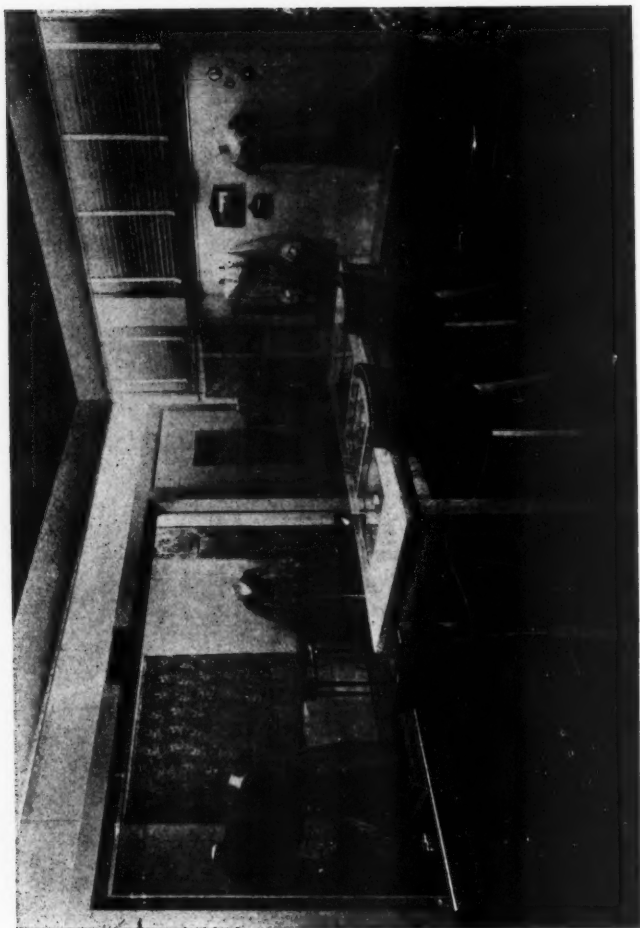


Figure 1

## The Helen Ward Memorial Room and An Exhibition of Costumes and Textiles from the Museum Collections

This number of the Bulletin of the Allen Memorial Art Museum is issued to coincide with the presentation to the college by her parents and her brother of a small memorial gallery in memory of Helen Ward of the Oberlin Class of 1932. At the time of her tragic death in 1947, she was associated with the Museum of Modern Art in New York. She had previously been a member of the staff of the Museum of Costume Art which is now a part of the Metropolitan collections. In addition to these interests in the arts, especially those of textiles and costume, Helen had for a good many years been closely associated with the theatre, first through graduate study in the School of the Drama at Yale and then in connection with a number of companies of summer players. It seemed appropriate, therefore, that a room in the Allen Memorial Museum should be set aside in her memory for the study and exhibition of all types of art which might be associated with dress or decoration whether costumes, fabrics or related objects. Oberlin already had the beginnings of such a collection, and through most generous gifts of personal friends and others this initial collection has been greatly expanded until it now seems worthy of a special exhibition and of the publication of this number of the Bulletin.

The room itself (Fig. 1) has been remodelled from one formerly used for the photograph collections and general utility. Space for these purposes has now been provided elsewhere. The room has been planned both for display and as a seminar for study, conferences or small classes. Walls of monk's cloth form a neutral background, and there is a small "stage" along one side in which groups of figures and furniture may be arranged. The lighting has been made unusually flexible both against the walls and in the room itself. Space has also been provided in a cedar lined closet for the storage of a large number of textiles, thus making them very easily accessible for study or enjoyment. To complete the furnishings there is a bookcase containing a small collection of books from Helen's own library and others which deal especially with textiles, costumes or the stage from the museum shelves.

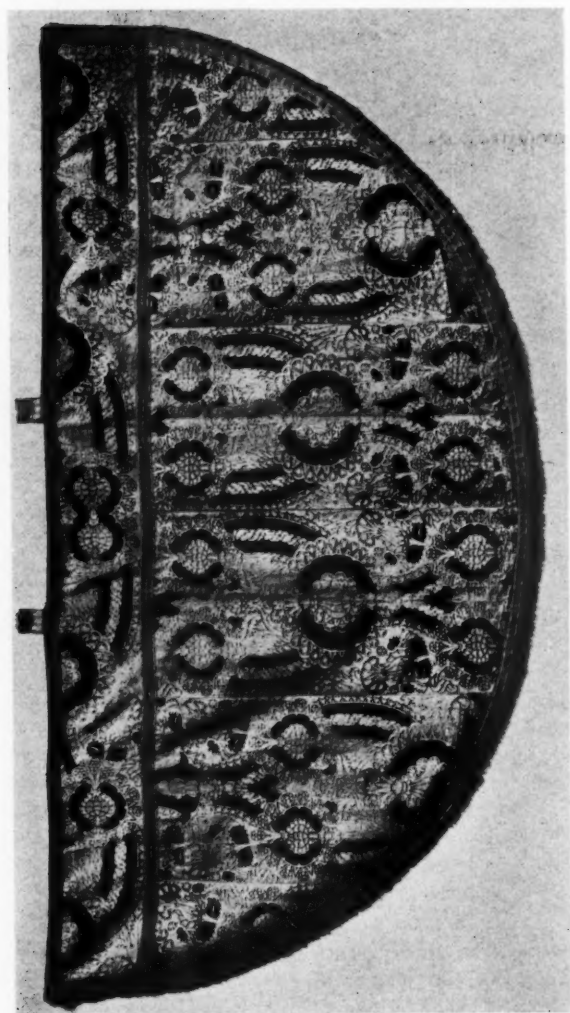


Figure 2

The Memorial Collection itself contains a good many objects from each of the three fields of textiles, costumes and accessories. From these and the many other items already in the possession of the college, a representative selection has been made for this Memorial Exhibit, and a few important objects in each major category are described in the following pages.

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GALLERY II contains a selection of ecclesiastical vestments and furnishings. Such vestments are important in the field of costume not only for themselves but because they were frequently made from the finest materials available and have often come down to us in an unusually good state of preservation. The collection shown in this exhibition includes two copes, one an Italian pluviale of the 15th century, described in subsequent paragraphs, and the other a French cope of the 18th century. Four dalmatics and five chasubles together with a number of stoles, maniples and burses dating from the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries are also shown. To these should be added an embroidered Italian altar frontal and two woven damask panels from Switzerland. These last two, and a large share of the Italian pluviale, constitute a special memorial gift from Mr. and Mrs. Abris Silberman and Mr. and Mrs. Elkan Silberman.

The objects in the gallery are supplemented by another altar frontal and an embroidered canopy panel to be seen in the cases in the south corridor of the sculpture court. Both of these are illustrated and described below.

Possibly the most important of the ecclesiastical vestments in the collection is the pluviale (Fig. 2), fashioned from Florentine patterned velvet and dating from the end of the fifteenth century. It is a magnificent vestment, semicircular in shape, with silver clasps. It is of dark red velvet, richly brocaded in gold with an ogival and pomegranate pattern as the main motif. The pomegranate (the apple of love) was the "characteristic ornament of the fifteenth century . . . The pomegranate in the center symbolizes Christian love; the surrounding blossoms and fruit indicate that love, by the aid of faith, brings forth the fruit of everlasting life." (Hunter, *Decorative Textiles*, p. 41). The oriental influences which played such a strong part in the great age of Italian textile design, may be seen in the forms of the carnation and other semi-conventionalized floral motifs.



Figure 3



According to tradition this pluviale was presented in 1488 by Matthias Corvinus, King of Hungary, to Thomas de Bakocz, who "under Wladislaus II (1490-1516) became successively bishop of Eger, archbishop of Esztergom (1497), cardinal (1500) and titular patriarch of Constantinople (1510)." (*Enc. Brit.* p. 946). The period was one of very lively commercial and artistic connection between Hungary and Italy. Mr. Abris Silberman wrote concerning the pluviale that after the death of Thomas de Bakocz it was bequeathed to Queen Isabella, who was of Polish descent. Balthasar Wilceckh of Guttenlandt, a member of one of the most important Polish noble-families, the Bannière of Queen Isabella, received this pluviale as a present from the Queen. This Balthasar is the progenitor of the family of Wilczek, owners of the Castle of Kreuzenstein and this piece belongs to the very few objects in the Wilczek Collection which were treasured as family heir-looms for centuries.

Exhibited: The Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, Michigan; The Rockefeller Center Exposition, November 1934, New York (illustrated in the catalog); The Grand Rapids Art Gallery, Grand Rapids, Michigan, "Masterpieces of Weaver's Art," November 1941, cat. no. 138; The High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Georgia, "Gems of European Art," 1943, cat. no. 45.

Published: *Museum News*, Atlanta Art Association, January 1943, vol. III.

Collection: Count Wilczek, Castle of Kreuzenstein, Austria.

Width: 116½" (fringe: 1¼)

Length: 58".

Helen Ward Memorial Collection.

Inv. No. 48.306.

The dalmatic (Fig. 3) is probably Spanish of the 16th century. It is of heavy red velvet with decorative borders embroidered in color on a gold background. Scenes of the Transfiguration and the Ascension are represented on the front and back panels while figures of Saint Francis and Saint Mary Magdalene (?) are embroidered on the sleeves.

Length: back 43½", sleeves 20½",

Width: shoulders 21½", hem 35".

Helen Ward Memorial Collection.

Inv. No. 48.152.



Figure 4

The chasuble, stole, maniple and burse (Fig. 4) are of brocaded French silk of the 18th century. The design is that of a waving ribbon running lengthwise of the material, in silver and gold on a background of old rose, over which are scattered bouquets of flowers. The colors include rose, greens, blues, cream, lavender, black, gold and silver. The trimmings are of gold braid added at a later period.

Chasuble: Length 42".  
Width 27".

Inv. No. 32.14.

Maniple: Length 34".

Inv. No. 32.16.

Stole: Length 79".

Inv. No. 32.15.

Burse: Length  $10\frac{1}{4}$ ".  
Width  $10\frac{1}{4}$ ".

Inv. No. 32.17.

The "Last Supper", Italian (?), middle sixteenth century, is an embroidered panel, depicting Christ and his twelve disciples seated at a table celebrating the Feast of the Passover. Christ is in the center, with one hand raised in blessing. On the table are the Paschal Lamb, the wine and the loaves of unleavened bread. The group is seated behind three arches, supported by columns.

The main part of the panel is embroidered with silk thread in flat stitch on linen, while the faces are appliquéd satin, slightly tinted and embroidered. The colors used were cream, yellow, rose, green and blue. Gold and silver threads were couched on.

Collection: Robert Lehman.

Height: 11".

Width:  $22\frac{1}{2}$ ".

Exhibited at Berea College, Berea, Kentucky, December 1947.

Gift of Mr. Robert Lehman.

Inv. No. 43.252.



Figure 5

The altar frontal, (detail Fig. 5) is probably from the Burgundian or Upper Rhine School of the middle of the 15th century and represents the Life of the Virgin.

The design is made up of seven sections, columns separating one section from another. The sections represent the following scenes in the life of the Virgin: 1) Annunciation, 2) Presentation, 3) Visitation, 4) Coronation, 5) Adoration of the Shepherds, 6), and 7) Adoration of the Magi.

This altar frontal is a handsome piece of embroidery in silk on linen. The design is beautifully worked out in satin or flat stitch, in red, blue, green, yellow, orange and white. The figures are handled in a sensitive manner; the branching scroll of stylized flowers and leaves makes a fitting border for the scenes in the life of the Virgin.

Adolf Loewi writes of the frontal, "There is no similar piece in any private or public collection in this country and even in Europe there are exceedingly few specimens of this kind. In this country there is only the little bit earlier embroidery, white silk on linen without colors, which the Metropolitan owns, which has any relationship at all."

Height: 25".

Length: 140".

Exhibited, Richmond Museum of Fine Arts, January-March, 1945.

Collection, George Seligmann, Paris (who had acquired it from Basel-Besançon region) until c. 1923; Spiro, Krummau (Bohemia) c. 1924-1944.

R. T. Miller Jr. Fund.

Inv. No. 44.104.



Figure 6

The canopy panel (south corridor) (Fig. 6) represents "The Meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek" and is Flemish (school of Brussels), about 1520. It is one of four which probably decorated a portable baldachin for the host when carried in processions, since the scenes on all four panels refer to the Last Supper, the other three being, "The Manna in the Wilderness," "The Supper at Emmaus" and "The Last Supper" itself.

The embroidered figures, foreground and clouds are applied on a red velvet background. The embroidery is in tones of pink, green, blue and gold, and much of it is in very bold relief.

Collection: Prince of Orléans, Bologna (see Hirth's *Formenschatz*, 1904).

Width: 20".

Length: 76".

R. T. Miller Jr. Fund.

Inv. No. 41.79.

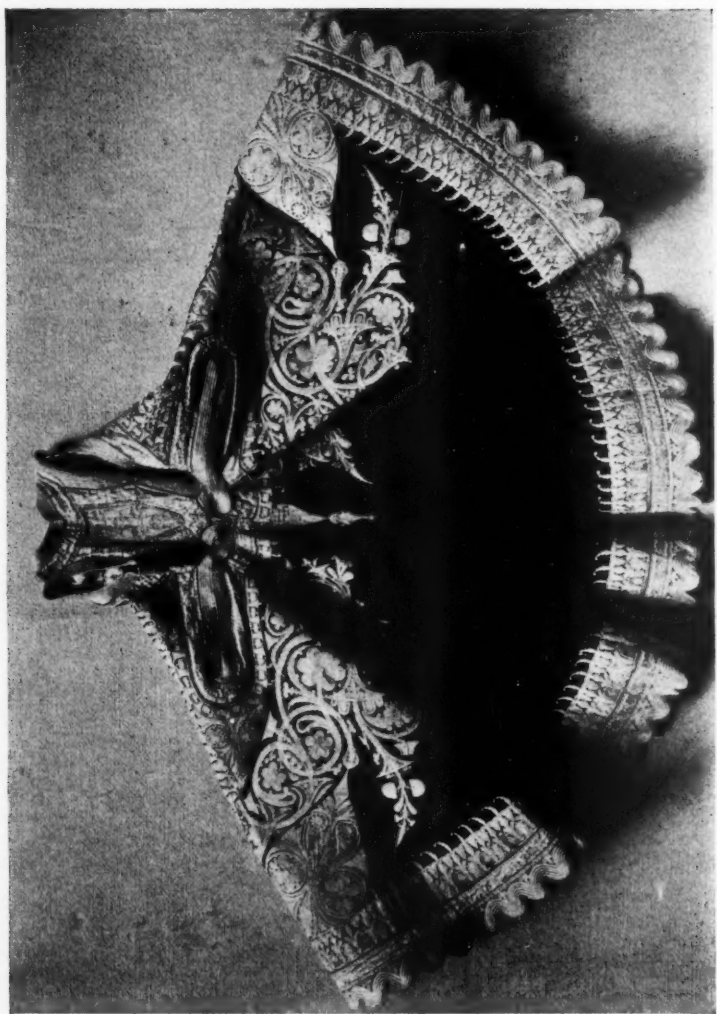


Figure 7



GALLERY III contains selected examples from the museum's modest collection of textiles and costumes from countries outside of Europe and the United States and from the Balkan region. The costumes include peasant dress from Albania, Macedonia, Slovakia, Moravia and Czechoslovakia and some pieces from China and the Far East. On the walls are examples of textiles from various regions including some Mexican Samplers from the Amos B. McNairy Collection.

The Albanian woman's costume, of which the coat (Fig. 7) forms a part, dates from c.1800 and comes from Ioannina, Epirus (now a part of Greece). It is the gift of Miss Elena Trayan in memory of her sister Marie Trayan Ellis of the class of 1918. The costume is of the type worn by Moslem women on holidays and feast days in Central Albania, and is in nine separate pieces.

The coat is sleeveless and cut in a circular pattern. It is of black broadcloth heavily embroidered in gold braid. This is used to form solid floral motifs which produce a very rich appearance. The border is made of a curving band of similar braid. The length of the coat is 43".

The blouse is of handwoven silk gauze with silk stripes. Its sleeves are embroidered in silver in an all-over floral motif with solid bands of embroidery at the bottom.

The trousers have voluminous legs held in at the ankle by cuffs of black broadcloth embroidered in gold to match the coat. The material of the trousers is a bright pink brocaded satin with a leaf design in blue and white with white interlacing vines. The trouser width is 92".

The apron is of cotton gauze with woven stripes. The design consists of geometrical and floral patterns in bands on the lower twelve inches of the apron. It is a type of finger weaving, the motifs being woven in with the fingers as the piece progresses. The colors are red, yellow, purple and white with gold threads. Its length is 18" and its width 17½".

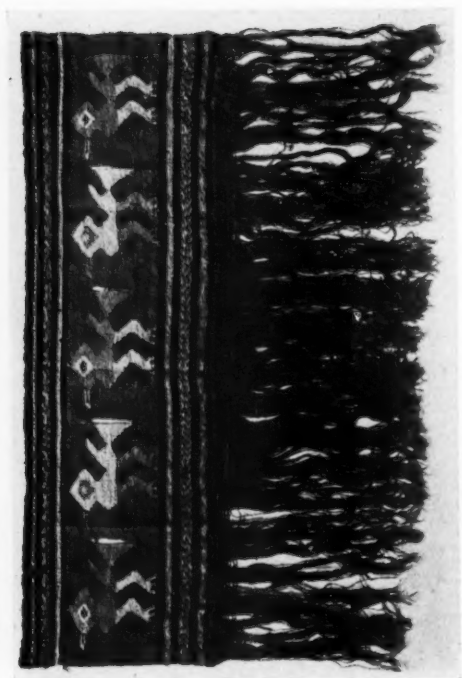


Figure 8

The head-kerchief is of handwoven white silk gauze with satin threads forming checks; a magenta band decorates the outer edges and there is a fringe on two sides. Its length is 45½" and its width 33".

The slippers are of velvet, high heeled with open backs. The toes are embroidered in silver thread.

The slipper patterns are white felt with a multi-colored floral design. They were embroidered by Mrs. Ellis herself between the ages of thirteen and fourteen.

The sash is handwoven white silk gauze with pale pink bands on either edge. Its length is 88", its width 13".

The underblouse is of white cotton crepe with satin stripes; the sleeves and bottom are edged with needle lace. Its length is 31". A similar type of costume is illustrated in the *National Geographic Magazine* (vol. LVIII, p. 680).

The inventory numbers for this costume are as follows: coat: 44.144, blouse: 44.145, trousers: 44.146, apron: 44.147, head-kerchief: 44.148, slippers: 44.149, sash: 44.150, slipper pattern: 44.151, underblouse: 44.152.

The Peruvian textile (Fig. 8) of the late Chimú Culture, X-XV century A. D., is a section of a border, probably for a garment. It is a kelim tapestry weave, with the characteristic slits left in the weaving. These were sometimes sewed up. The stylized bird motif of the border is symbolic of the power of the air, which force had to be appeased. The design is worked out in red, black, green and yellow wool weft threads (cotton warp). There is a long red fringe sewed onto the border.

Length: 24".  
Width: 7" (fringe 7½").  
R. T. Miller Jr. Fund.  
Inv. No. 43.134.



Figure 9

The Mexican sampler (Fig. 9) is from the McNairy collection of nineteen samplers dating from 1812 to the late 19th century. This particular example consists of a number of separate pieces put together in a large panel. It comes from the collection of the Empress Carlotta and is inscribed: Su Majesta Napoleon 1866.



Figure 10

The PRINT ROOM and GALLERY IV contain a group of textiles, costumes and accessories of the 19th and early 20th centuries, a number of them closely related to Oberlin or other towns in the vicinity.

Among a number of elaborate wedding gowns, there is one of satin, the gift of Mrs. J. B. Thomas of Elyria, which dates from 1881, one of organdy, 1875, from Miss Margaret Schaufler and a charming wine red wedding outfit with jacket and bonnet from J. Herbert Nichols and Ruth B. Nichols. Among a number of dresses given by Miss Alice Little is an amusing example of the intricately draped bustle-typed skirt of 1880 in grey taffeta with harmonizing brocade. In the cases and on the walls are shawls, bed covers, a sampler and other fabrics. The costume accessories include a selection of pieces from the Mrs. Fred White Collection of laces and handkerchiefs. Various periods are also represented by hats, jewelry, fans and other objects.

The embroidered scenic panel (Fig. 10), the gift of Ivanore V. Barnes of the class of 1918, is French-style embroidery and was done by Miss Barnes' great-great-grandmother early in the 19th century. The charming rural scene is that of a gentleman and his wife sitting on a knoll by a large tree with a house in the left background and a hill to the right. A small boy and three sheep are at the left and two small girls are under the tree. There is a pond in the foreground. The different areas of sky, trees, figures and foreground were painted on the dull side of rather heavy white satin in water color. Large areas were embroidered, such as the tree and figures, with silk and wool threads in flat and looped stitches. The sky, the pond and the faces were left just painted. The work was done at the old Bentley home on the Monongahela River, about sixty miles north of the city of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Height: 16 $\frac{3}{8}$ ".

Length: 20".

Inv. No. 46.33.

Presented in loving memory of Ivanore Barnes' grandmother, Elisabeth Bentley, who gave it to her.



Figure 11



The woven coverlet (detail, cover) bears the inscription "John Hartman, Lafayette, Ohio, 1844," and is the gift of Katherine Bushnell Spencer of the class of 1917. It is identical in pattern with the John Mellinger coverlet, 1839, illustrated in *A Book of Hand-Woven Coverlets* by Eliza C. Hall; except that the bands of color are arranged differently. This type of coverlet was woven on a Jacquard loom by a professional weaver, who traveled about from place to place. The designs used were common property and occurred again and again, including the motifs of the eagle, the rose and the sun. The colors used in this coverlet are blue, white, red and green. The inscription is woven in on the lower right and left corners.

Length: 86".

Width: 75", with 2" fringe.

Inv. No. 43.236.

THE HELEN WARD MEMORIAL ROOM is on the second floor at the head of the staircase at the northeast corner of the building. It contains a group of costumes and fabrics dating in large part from the 18th century, all of which are from the Memorial collection. There are also displayed in the table cases and elsewhere some accessories of this same period; such as, snuff boxes, fans, etc.

Among the costumes in the room is a French gown (Fig. 11), a "robe à la française" of the mid-eighteenth century. This is of green brocaded taffeta with floral designs carried out in rose, cream, orange and blue. The style is that of a one-piece dress with square neckline and close-fitting elbow-length sleeves with lace decorations. The full skirt is held out at the sides by pannier hoops. The material at the back of the bodice is laid on in characteristic "Watteau" pleats, flowing from the neckline into the skirt and forming a slight train. The gown and the stomacher of the same material are decorated with braid. The slits in the side seams of the skirt opened into pockets and enabled the wearer to put her hands through to manipulate the hoops when necessary.

Collection: Delnero, Rome.

Helen Ward Memorial Collection.

Inv. No. 48.160.



Figure 12

There is also a gentleman's costume (Fig. 12) Italian, mid-eighteenth century, of dark green changeable taffeta.

The coat is long and fitted, sloping away below the waist. Pleats at the back give some fullness, though no longer held out by stiffening. The coat is worn open with buttons on one side but with no corresponding buttonholes. It is embroidered in delicate floral motifs in tints of rose, green, blue and white. There are leaf motifs of net appliqué, embroidered buttons and large embroidered pockets. Turnover cuffs are finished with lace ruffles. There is a small stand-up collar.

The breeches come to a close fit at the knee where they are fastened with buttons and a buckled embroidered band. There are two pockets on each side of the front.

The waistcoat is of cream satin, embroidered with a fine all-over flower motif. It has two lower pockets with embroidered flaps.

Helen Ward Memorial Collection.  
Inv. No. 48.171.

The objects shown in this exhibition constitute only a part of the actual collection of textiles and costumes owned by the Allen Museum. These include an outstanding group of oriental rugs and two late Mediaeval tapestries as well as some examples of coptic art. A more complete list of the collection as a whole follows.

#### ECCLESIASTICAL VESTMENTS, ETC.

- 2 Copes, Italian and French, 15th and 18th centuries
- 4 Dalmatics, French, South American and Spanish, 16th, 17th and 18th centuries
- 5 Chasubles, Italian and French, 16th, 17th and 18th centuries
- 1 Stole, French, 18th century
- 1 Maniple, French, 18th century
- 3 Burses, French and Italian, 18th century
- 2 Altar Frontals, French and Italian, 15th and 18th centuries
- 1 Embroidered Panel from a Canopy, Flemish, 16th century
- 2 Woven Linen Damask Hangings, Swiss, 17th century

#### MEN'S COSTUME

- 7 Items, Men's Costume, American, 19th century
- 13 Items, Men's Costume, European, 17th, 18th and 19th centuries
- 3 Items, Men's Costume, Oriental, 19th century

#### WOMEN'S COSTUME

- 47 Dresses, American, 19th and 20th centuries
- 19 Bodices and Jackets, American, 19th and 20th centuries
- 9 Skirts, American, 19th century
- 1 Coat, American, 19th century
- 37 Hats and Bonnets, American, 19th and 20th centuries
- 6 Dresses, French, 18th century
- 4 Dresses, French and Italian, 19th and 20th centuries
- 6 Peasant Costumes, European, 18th, 19th and 20th centuries

### CHILDREN'S COSTUME

- 48 Items, Babies' Costume, American, 19th century
- 15 Items, Children's Costume, American, 19th century
  - 1 Child's Bodice, French, 18th century
  - 1 Baby's Jacket, French, 19th century
  - 1 Child's Bodice, Italian, 17th century

### TEXTILES

- 41 Silk Textiles, French, Italian and Spanish, 16th, 17th and 18th centuries
- 30 Silk Textiles, Japanese, 20th century
- 29 Printed Textiles, American and Swedish, 20th century
- 15 Printed Textiles, French, 18th and 19th centuries
- 14 Batiks, Javanese, 19th century
  - 1 Embroidered Picture, American, c. 1800
- 41 Embroidered Textiles, Chinese, Czechoslovakian, Hungarian, Moroccan and Turkish, 18th, 19th and 20th centuries
- 10 Embroidered Handkerchiefs, English, French and Swiss, 19th century
- 107 Laces, American and European, 18th, 19th and 20th centuries
  - 3 Samplers, American and English, 19th century
  - 19 Samplers, Mexican, 19th century
  - 7 Coverlets and Quilts, American, 18th, 19th and 20th centuries
- 15 Textiles, English, 20th century
- 7 Textiles, Persian, 18th and 19th centuries
- 6 Textiles, Peruvian
- 2 Tapestry Panels, Coptic, 3rd and 7th centuries
  - 1 Kossu, Chinese, Ming dynasty
  - 1 Damask Square, English, 18th century
  - 1 Obi, Japanese, 19th century
  - 1 Tapa Cloth, South Seas, 19th century
- 6 Woven Textiles, West African, 19th and 20th centuries
- 35 Mounted Study Examples, European and Asiatic, 16th to 20th century

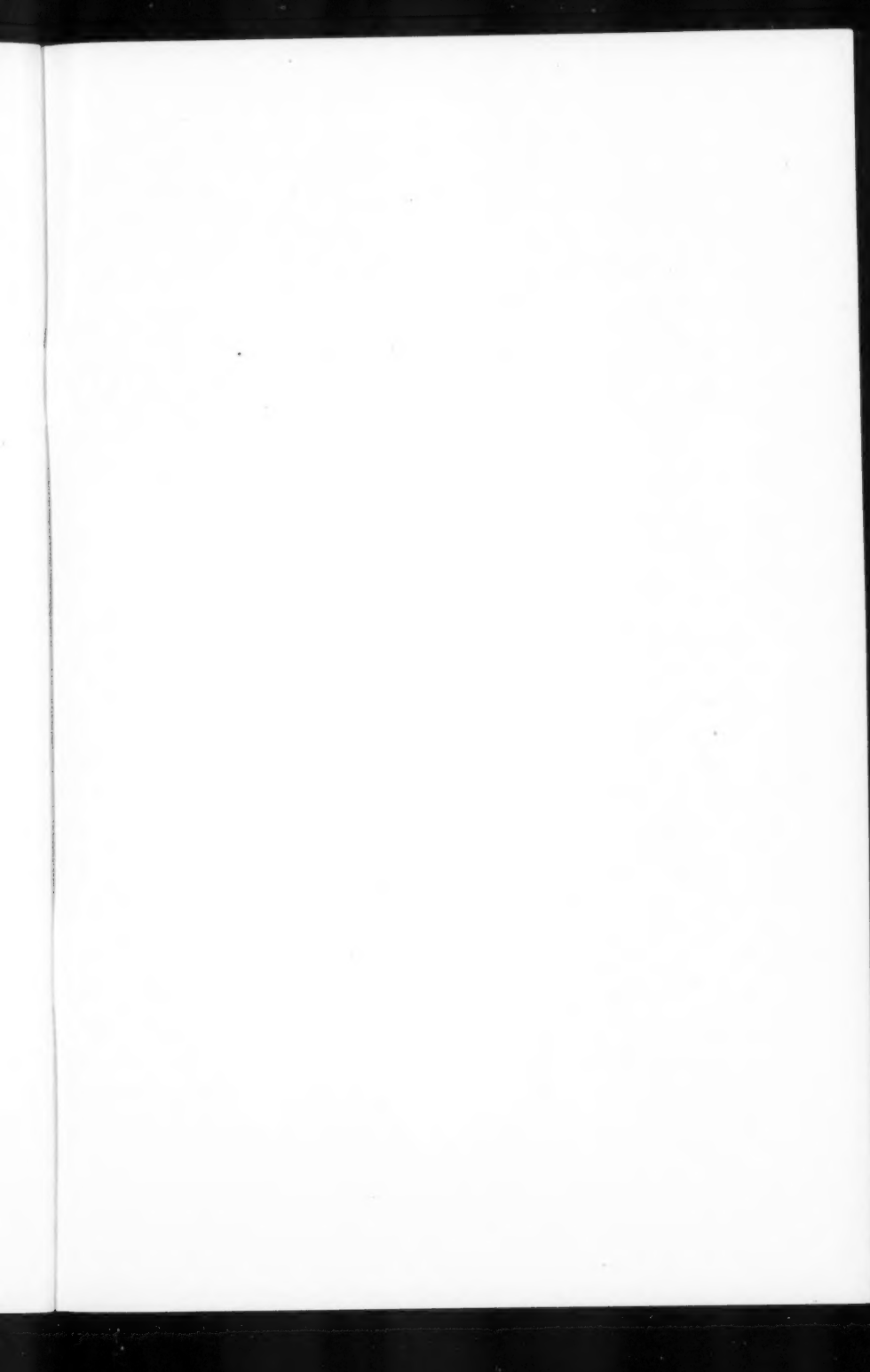
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